

# Editor of Daily Worker Quits Communist Party

By Harry Ring

The resignation of John Gates from the Communist Party, Jan. 10, brings to virtual disintegration the group centered largely around the staff of the now-defunct Daily Worker which had voiced resistance to the drive of William Z. Foster to reimpose the Stalinist vise upon the party. At the same time, however, a new anti-Foster grouping appears to be developing on the issue of ideological independence from Moscow and the right of free discussion in the party. The strongest expression of this opposition so far has come from the party's Northern California District.

Gates, however, has washed his hands of the inner-party fight. His letter of resignation stated he was quitting because he was convinced the party "cannot be changed from within and that the fight to do so was hopeless." At the Jan. 10 press conference where he made the resignation public, he said he was leaving the party "to rejoin the American people," and added he had no interest in forming a new group, "especially no splinter group not acceptable to labor, the Negro people and other groups interested in American democracy."

## STILL FRIENDLY TO SOVIET UNION

Stating that he would now describe himself as a "democratic Socialist," Gates said he remained sympathetic to the Soviet Union on the basis of its economic and scientific achievements, but opposed its lack of political democracy. He charged that the Soviet Communist Party had aided Foster in his efforts to crush the "independence" movement in the American CP and said he now sees the party as a "futile sect."

He bitterly assailed Foster, Ben Davis and Eugene Dennis as responsible for the death of the Daily Worker, charging they had withheld available funds because of their opposition to the paper's line. Gates is expected to elaborate his reasons for quitting the party in a series of articles scheduled to appear in the New York Post beginning Jan. 20.

Meanwhile, the Post reported that a number of ex-Daily Worker staff members, including Alan Max, Abner Berry and Lester Rodney, are planning on following Gates out of the Party.

The final issue of the Daily Worker, dated Jan. 13 was headlined "We'll Be Back." This theme was echoed in columns by George Morris, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and A. B. Magil. Columns by Max, Berry and Rodney indicated that in their view the death of the paper was final. They were ambiguous



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about their own plans for the future.

## CRISIS CONTINUES

The crumbling of the Gatesite opposition to Foster does not signify, however, that stability is in sight for the dwindling, crisis-wracked party. This is evident from the December issue of the CP bulletin, Party Affairs, which reports the proceedings at the November meeting of the national committee and other related material. A resolution directed to the national committee by unanimous vote of the Northern California District Committee vigorously assails the Foster grouping as "dogmatists" who are preventing resolution of the party crisis by trying to stamp out discussion of unresolved issues.

Evidence of the new rift in the leadership had previously emerged with the report of the December meeting of the party's national executive committee where a Fosterite motion to endorse the Moscow declaration of 12 Communist parties was defeated 11 to 7. Endorsement of the 12-party declaration was viewed as repudiating the "independence" mandate of the past national convention. The same NEC meeting, also saw a division between Dennis and organization secretary Sid Stein. The two had previously been associated in a "center" group in the leadership.

The Northern California resolution states: "We are deeply disturbed at a current in the National Committee . . . which looks upon every attempt to discuss something new as a departure from Marxism-Leninism, and which hails every erroneous estimate of our convention by Communists abroad as gospel. This has paralyzed our party into inaction, and this paralysis is itself liquidating the party before our very eyes."

Speaking on this resolution, Northern California Chairman Mickie Lima repeated the charge that discussion was being throt-

tled and pointedly declared: ". . . some Party leaders are bamboozled by what they regard as a danger of split in the party. . ."

So far as the Northern California party is concerned, Lima said, "we will not be deterred by name-calling. . . . We state that we will carry on a determined struggle against name-calling as a continuation of a dogmatic and bureaucratic method of work. . . . We feel that, if we are to guarantee debate and discussion enabling us to arrive at majority decisions on important questions, that the national leadership should declare war on the poisonous atmosphere which exists in New York and surrounds the national center and even involves some members of this national committee."

Opposition to Foster's efforts to re-establish the party as an echo of the Kremlin line is also contained in declarations favoring discussion and united action with other radical tendencies—a policy opposed by Foster. Among those opposing him on this is the New England District Committee which says: ". . . the CP of N.E. should cooperate and participate where possible in Socialist Forums and joint activities with all Left groups."

This stand reflects a growing recognition that refusal to participate in discussion with other socialist currents can only lead to still further isolation of the party. Such recognition is expressed in a statement by Carl Ross entitled, "Attitude Toward Trotskyism in Minnesota."

Ross disavows any political sympathy for the Trotskyist viewpoint. In fact his statement includes a Stalinist-type slander that the SWP is "exploiting" and impairing Minnesota defense activity on behalf of Morton Sobell. At the same time, however, he says, "Certainly it is wrong to boycott a useful campaign because it may be led by Trotskyists."

Pointing out that "old attitudes" toward the Trotskyists "are no longer effective," Ross observes that the Trotskyist stand for independent labor politics is being shared by others in the radical movement. This means, he says, "we must of necessity participate and meet on ideological grounds the Trotskyist views. . ."

Such an approach is also necessary, he continues, because many CP members now consider the old party statute forbidding association with Trotskyists "as insulting to their intelligence."